



The Cas di Cultura hosts the successful opening of the Grace Ashruf exhibition

Pulsing with vibrant colors and bold strokes, the paintings of artist Grace Ashruf, which are on exhibition at the Cas di Cultura for two weeks, until November 29, transports one into the Silence and Space of the Caribbean. That is the name and theme of her new exhibition of sixty-two paintings “E Caribe: Silencio y Biento.”

Born in Suriname, Grace now makes her home in Aruba, and the island’s influence on her work is evident in the various ways she depicts the natural landmarks and the traditional cunucu houses that are characteristic of her homeland of the last six years. Grace studied art at the Nola Hatterman Institute in Suriname and the Tuscany Art School, the Monet Art School and the Rafael Landivar University in Guatemala.

“I have been living in the Caribbean for nine years now and have visited several islands in the region. One of the first things I notice when I arrive on an island and step off the plane is this special warm welcoming wind and a feeling of silence and space...people on the islands are relaxed and friendly in a natural way,” and her paintings convey these feelings admirably. Sailboats and simplified landscapes are a recurring theme. “When looking at my paintings you will hear and feel the wind, feel the tranquility and the silence. You will hear the song of the wind because your eyes will be drawn to follow the circular texture I create as a base on most of my paintings,” she confesses. “The sailboats I have painted do not express the technical aspects of the boat. For me the painting evokes how one might go through life: alone, with a partner, with a group as a family...floating on quiet waters, fighting in troubled or wild waters.”

Brilliant and eye-catching hues and images dominate the work that the artist describes as “modern colorful and representational abstract.”

“I like to have a subject the viewer can relate to. While creating a painting I like to involve the viewer in the painting by prompting them to ask themselves questions—wondering why I painted something a certain way, why I might have left out a detail, why the color is not the same throughout a painting...I have an expressive brushstroke that seems to evoke mystery.” In this, she is very successful, as the viewer is drawn into the haunting landscape of a hilltop with a lone cunucu house, done in a series with each painting based on a different color. The effect is very interesting, as one can see how the choice of color affects the mood that each painting evokes.

Grace has graced Aruba with her presence and her talent, and is now sharing it with the public. She is grateful to UNOCA and Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds for their sponsorship of this exhibition, which can be enjoyed daily from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Sunday in the exhibition room of the Cas di Cultura in Oranjestad.